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RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANJUL 000712

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DAKAR PLS PASS ODC, DAO, AND RAO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/23/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KMCA](#) [PTER](#) [GA](#)  
SUBJECT: THE GAMBIA: MORE SENIOR PERSONNEL CHANGES IN GOTG

REF: A. BANJUL 701 ET AL  
[1](#)B. BANJUL 698 (ALL NOTAL)

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH STAFFORD, REASON 1.4 (B AND D)

SUMMARY

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[1](#)1. (C) Interior Secretary of State (Minister) Jatta was removed in President Jammeh's ongoing personnel shakeup, and former Gambian Ambassadors to Nigeria and Morocco were among new appointees. We do not/not believe that the change of leadership at the National Intelligence Agency signals a desire by Jammeh to curtail bilateral counterterrorism-related cooperation. END SUMMARY.

ONGOING SPATE OF GOTG PERSONNEL CHANGES

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[1](#)2. (U) Following President Jammeh's mid-October cabinet reshuffle (ref a), the spate of senior GOTG personnel changes continues. On November 23, local media reported the dismissal of Interior Secretary of State (Minister) Baboucar Jatta, succeeded by the Inspector General of Police, Ousman Sonko. No reasons were given for Jatta's removal; regarded as close to Jammeh, Jatta, a career military officer, had served for around ten years as Chief of Defense Staff prior to his 2005 appointment to the Interior portfolio.

[1](#)3. (U) There have also been changes in the ranks of Permanent Secretaries, the number-two officials in the GOTG's

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Departments (Ministries). We are aware of the recent replacement of Permanent Secretaries at three Departments, Foreign Affairs, Works, Construction and Infrastructural Development, and Youth, Sports, and Religious Affairs. Parastatals have also been affected, with the heads of The Gambia Telecommunications Company (GAMTEL) and The Gambia Cellular Telephone Company (GAMCEL) being replaced last week.

APPOINTMENTS FROM THE GAMBIAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS

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[1](#)4. (SBU) President Jammeh turned to his diplomatic corps to fill two key positions. Pa Jallow, High Commissioner (Ambassador) to Nigeria, was appointed Director General of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), while Mawdo Touray, Ambassador to Morocco, was named Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary. Sources' initial reaction to these appointments is

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generally positive. We are told that both Jallow and Touray have been among the GOTG's better performers in their

previous diplomatic and other governmental positions.

COMMENT

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15. (C) In the absence of any official explanations, the precise reasons for these latest personnel changes were unclear, but they were undoubtedly at Jammeh's direct instruction. Piecing together assessments of contacts, we gather that incompetence and corruption were factors in various cases, in particular the replacements of two Permanent Secretaries (Foreign Affairs and Works, Construction and Infrastructural Development) as well as the two parastatal heads. As for the ousted Interior Secretary of State Jatta, he was generally seen as bringing at least modest improvement to The Gambia's law enforcement apparatus and untainted by corruption. However, sources indicate that Jatta's personal relationship with Jammeh had become increasingly strained of late. Jatta's successor, Ousman Sonko, has been generally cooperative on the Embassy's security issues, but is not known for managerial skills. Regarding the change of leadership at the NIA, as previously reported (ref b), we do not/not believe that it signals an intention by Jammeh to curtail bilateral cooperation in the area of counterterrorism. END COMMENT  
STAFFORD